

# MEMORANDUM

## State of Alaska

*Department of Transportation and Public Facilities*

**To:** File

**Date:** October 6, 2006

**Telephone No:** 269-0525

**From:** Paul Wescott, P.E.  
Project Manager

**Subject:** Togiak Main Road Rehab  
Manokotak Road Improv.  
AKSAS 53043

Rich Sewell and I were scheduled to go to Togiak and Manokotak September 19-20, 2006, to discuss road projects there to be funded in large part by the Denali Commission. Monday, September 18, 2006, Rich reported that he was ill and couldn't make the trip.

Monday, September 18, 2006, 3:30 p.m., I left for ANC to travel to Dillingham, base for visits to Togiak and Manokotak. I arrived at about 6:30 p.m. and checked in to the Bristol Inn. The Inn provided an airport shuttle. The next morning I phoned Bristol Bay Air Service (John Bouker), 842-2227, to check on my scheduled 8:00 a.m. flight to Togiak. Mr. Bouker picked me up at the Inn and drove me to the airport. We arrived in Togiak about 8:30 a.m. in his C-207.

### **Togiak**

Keith Tryck, a consultant to the City of Togiak and the Togiak Traditional Council, picked me up; we drove to the City offices. Mayor Gary Carlos and DPW/Administrator Darryl Thompson met us there. The City officials emphasized that their preference is that the City administer the project and perform the work if at all possible. Mr. Tryck agreed that the City is capable of administering the project but that ADOT is constrained by its and the federal government's policies when federal funds are involved. He said that a Public Interest Finding would be required, an iffy proposition but worth looking into. He also mentioned that the community could form a construction firm to bid on the project if that is the way the project develops.

Mr. Thompson conducted a tour of the town, pointing out projects completed by his forces, equipment available, material site available, etc. He showed us some of the projects completed on his watch such as the road to the material site, the family resource center, the new school, a HUD housing development, water and sewer systems and the sea wall. He has had to redo some of the outside contractors' work such as the new school water supply system which failed shortly after construction. Some of the City road projects involved deep (ten feet or so) replacement of tundra soils with gravel to stabilize the roads.

The BIA road project that the Denali Commission and the State hope to complete is partially constructed. The airport crosswind runway Safety Area was extended as shown in the plans and the culverts from the vicinity of the main road through the sea

wall were built. The existing road centerline elevation remains the same as before. Drainage is a problem because of the flat terrain and the lack of driveway culverts connecting roadside ditches. What ditches there are generally have very mild gradients and close attention will be necessary during their maintenance. The ROW necessary for the project is nearly in hand; the last piece, a land swap near a sharp curve in the road, is just finishing up. The remainder of the project will involve building up the road largely where it is now, constructing a dust-resistant surface (the village likes chip-seal), installing a ditch system with connecting driveway culverts and protecting the sea wall culvert inlets (and other culvert openings where necessary) from damage.

We spoke also with Tribal Administrator Walter Kanulie who supports the project. Close coordination between the City and the Council will be necessary and it seems that City/Council cooperation is already pretty good. We spoke briefly with former Council Vice President Frank Logusak.

The first language in Togiak is Yup'ik.

Personally, I was impressed with Togiak. It seems to have its act together more so than other villages I have visited. They have well-maintained pieces of equipment such as a sewer router, backhoe and a large portable generator (among other things) that are scarce in other bush communities. They have trained operators, CDLs and an able DPW/administrator in Mr. Thompson. They have acquired a UAA distance learning center housed in the Family Resource Center. Their office intern expects to get a BA there next spring. The Family Resource Center, a building renovated with grant funds, is a village jewel. Most or all of its office space is leased out and there are several apartments available for guests and visitors. The new school is a big, beautiful facility.

The City hopes to acquire a crusher, probably one of the older, more easily-maintained models, to provide material for this and other projects. The estimated cost is between \$70k and \$100k. Their plan if they get a crusher is to fly in a blaster from time to time to loosen enough rock to crush and sort so they have material for whatever projects are coming up and so they can maintain a stockpile for maintenance of the roads and the runway. As it is now, contractors bring in crushers, mess up the material site and then haul the crushers out when their projects are complete. Mobilizing equipment to Togiak or barging material in makes crushed rock and spec gravel expensive.

The City and the Council would like to raze the old school buildings in town except for the gym and a couple of other buildings in reasonably good shape. The gym would become a youth center

I left a copy of the Togiak Airport ALP at the City office.

While I was at the airport, a Frontier B1900 landed, throwing up sheets of water. The runway could use some attention.

I left Togiak on a PenAir flight with Mr. Tryck at about 4:00 p.m. to return to Dillingham. An Inn employee other than the one I'd spoken to the day before said that off-season the airport shuttle to Bristol Inn doesn't operate in the evening, so I cabbed to the Inn, \$6.00 plus tip. I guess the Inn person the night before was just being nice to come get me.

## **Manokotak**

On the morning of September 20, 2006, Dillingham, I again phoned John Bouker at Bristol Air to verify the flight to Manokotak. Mr. Bouker picked me up and we were in the air at 8:00 a.m. for the 15-minute flight to Manokotak.

A van took me to the Manokotak City office where I met the Mayor, Ferdinand Sharp, and the Administrator, Edward Nick. I gave them reduced-size copies of the new airport construction plans (just for their information) which showed material sites and proposed roads east of the village. I also left a copy of the Denali Commission/ADOT MOA.

The first language in Manokotak is Yup'ik.

Back at my Anchorage office, I had learned that Manokotak had plans for road improvements that were to be nominated to the Denali Commission. At Manokotak I saw a 2004 KAE report that included a three-phase road improvement project, the first phase of which was estimated at just about what the nomination called for. That work involves improving the roads in the original village. The Denali proposal I saw was for \$750k, but I warned the Mayor and Administrator that the final amount may be different. City Council President Moses Toyukak Sr. stopped by and said that he thought the first road improvements were to be between the original village and the new subdivision to the east. That is the main school bus route.

Mssrs. Sharp and Nick drove me around town to point out problem areas. The roads are at grade and drainage is a big issue. Several mountain watersheds drain through the village on their way to the sea and the roads are smack in the middle. There is very little ditch along any of the roads and several culverts need repairs. In response to a question from the Mayor, I said that culverts should have at least a foot of cover.

We then drove east past two material sites to a subdivision near the new school. Along the way, Mr. Nick pointed out several places where drainage is poor, where ice covers the road during winter, where subgrade soils are pumping into the surface course and where big rocks are exposed. He thinks that fabric under the surface course would be a good idea. He's right, assuming good drainage. Where the road is flat there are potholes indicating water problems. The road between the original village and the subdivision ten+ miles east is important because the school buses travel it.

We passed the existing landfill which is over capacity. The village has plans to close it and turn it into a playing field. A new landfill is likely to be built at the first material site east of the village. KAE had conceptually laid out a series of landfill cells in their report. The material from the site of the proposed landfill is blasted, resulting in sharply-fractured stone. The Mayor said that it causes a lot of flat tires.

We drove as far as the barge beach landing at the Weary River. The last segment of road near the Weary River needs constant attention to keep it passable. The several-mile stretch of road before the landing has the best looking cross-section I've seen in town. It has decent, formal ditches.

The ridge identified in the airport construction plans as a material site a couple of miles south of the road is visible from the road.

One area in the new subdivision floods hip-deep at break-up. The culvert under the road is more or less at the low point of a gully that rises in either direction.

We stopped for lunch at the new school (\$5.00) where I spoke briefly with the Principal, Herman Gerving. He seems upbeat about the school's situation. It has about \$45,000 to fly sports teams around the area. He has several activities programs he's working on. The school is a large, well laid-out facility, which helps teacher morale – hence recruitment and retention.

After we got back to the office, Mayor Sharp gave me a set of notes that he made during the day's travels. They are incorporated in this report.

I left the City office about 2:00 p.m. telling them I would walk to the airport and look at the road on the way. The roads are level with the adjacent natural ground except in the vicinity of culverts. It appears that in the past a lot of the surface course had been bladed off onto the shoulders and beyond. I met a Tribal Council fellow and we chatted a while about the roads and the need for repairs and maintenance. He was hopeful that we can get something done. I met a couple of fellows at the airport who were driving their little niece around in the good weather. They were still getting used to the quiet, new diesel generators powering the village.

I arrived back at my Anchorage apartment at 9:45 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Other**

I noticed that the green light of the airport rotating beacon is out.

Bristol Bay Air Service landed to unload passengers and freight. A camera crew from the Discovery Channel filmed Bristol Air as he took off and landed again for the camera. John offered me a ride to Dillingham (free), but I said I had to keep PenAir happy even though they were late getting in. Later, another pilot on the ground to pick up a fire-extinguisher inspector offered me a ride to Dillingham in his Cherokee; I declined his offer, too.

John Bouker, Bristol Air, has a good reputation. He and his passengers have survived a goose coming through the windshield, a couple of blown cylinders at altitude and other scary incidents. The local PenAir pilot we flew with is also described by other pilots as "the best."

John reported that the new Kokhanok runway is "not good." Apparently, it has an undulating surface and it gets muddy. He says that in landing he skips from one gravel crest to the next. He didn't recall that the runway was crowned. I didn't know if the project there was done yet, so I just said that I would pass his comments on.